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Agenda items 17, 18, 33, 71 (c) and 108

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: assistance to the Palestinian people

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Sixty-third year

Identical letters dated 23 January 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to bring to your attention a matter of high urgency and importance which has brought about anguish and grave concern for the whole international community, including the people and Government of my own country. As you are aware, the latest crimes of the Israeli regime in the Gaza Strip, as a blatant violation of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, have resulted in unspeakable sufferings for the people living in the Gaza Strip, and in the brutal killing and wounding of hundreds of people, including children and women, during the past several weeks.

The Israeli regime's continued acts of violence and terror against the Palestinian people have deteriorated the already dire and grave humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip, which United Nations officials have already described as "extremely fragile". As the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories has rightly stressed, "those

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responsible for such cowardly action are guilty of serious war crimes and should be prosecuted and punished for their crimes".

Due to the said inhumane policies and practices against the impoverished Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, particularly in the Gaza Strip, the situation there has been turned into a humanitarian catastrophe, unprecedented in recent history, where the civilian population continues to be collectively punished under an atrocious and crippling siege. In yet another showcase of its brutality, the Zionist regime has intensified its destruction of civilian infrastructure, and the closure of the Gaza Strip by sealing all border crossings, preventing even the delivery of basic goods such as foodstuffs and medical supplies to the innocent Palestinian people, and has cut off fuel to the main power plant in the Gaza Strip. These crimes have led to the starving of the people, the plunging of the whole area into darkness and the whole population being left in a very serious and dangerous humanitarian situation which is getting worse every hour.

The absence of a meaningful, timely and appropriate action by relevant officials and organs of the United Nations has emboldened the Israeli regime in its atrocities and unlawful actions. These recent Israeli war crimes in the Gaza Strip threaten international peace and security and would undoubtedly create more instability and serve to inflame tension and threaten to further destabilize the situation in the region. Therefore, it is an imperative for the international community to be more effectively involved and unambiguously prevent the said regime from carrying out its inhumane practices against the Palestinians. The Security Council has a responsibility to take appropriate measures to prevent the said regime from continuing its unlawful policies and actions. Recognizing the need for taking a decisive and meaningful action in the face of this new escalation of conflict in the region, we hope that all members of the Council, particularly those who have obstructed the Council's actions in this regard in the past, will live up to their responsibilities in properly addressing this grave situation.

The Israeli regime should be put under immediate pressure to end its occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories and to relinquish its atrocious practices against the Palestinian people, particularly its most recent brutalities against the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

Given the present difficult circumstances that the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip are experiencing, we earnestly expect the relevant United Nations agencies to take all possible and immediate measures in providing them with the basic goods and services they need at this critical juncture.

I would be grateful if you could have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda items 17, 18, 33, 71 (c) and 108, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mohammad **Khazaee**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative